



The Land of Nod

Apples Aplenty

In 1998, the National Park Service planted fourteen small apple trees in the orchard north of the main house. Those trees, none taller than five feet high, were the young descendents of the older trees still standing in the field. This fall, for the first time since they were planted, those genetic ancestors of the original apple trees produced fruit. Actually, most of the trees on site were laden with fruit this year, much to the delight of both visitors and staff.

This abundance of apples also afforded Horticulturist Greg Waters the opportunity to inventory and identify many of the different varieties of apple trees at the farm. Evidently, most of the trees are older varieties like the Rhode Island Greening, a favorite of Benjamin Franklin, and the famed Newtown Pippin, which was a favorite of Thomas Jefferson. On a trip to Paris, he lamented in a letter home that “they have no apples here to compare with our Newtown Pippin.”

Greg attributed this year’s success to good pollination weather, a thorough winter pruning program and the institution of a newly modified Integrated Pest Management process that limits the frequency of spraying and results in much healthier trees.

The Land of Nod: The name given to the Branchville property by J. Alden Weir and his artist friends. Both Weir and Childe Hassam used the phrase to title works that were inspired by the local landscape. Hildegard Cummings, in her essay *Art and Nature in the Landscapes of Nod*, affirms that Weir “and his friends delighted in the serendipitous allusion to the mythical land of pleasant dreams.”



Childe Hassam. *Road to the Land of Nod*, 1910. Oil on canvas, 24" x 30".
Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Connecticut

Art is long and time is fleeting.

Julian Alden Weir

Here at Weir Farm we definitely feel time fleeting. Happy New Year to all our friends, volunteers, partners and neighbors, as we look back on 2005 but can't resist anticipating 2006. We were very fortunate this year to welcome over 11,000 visitors to the park and to provide, together with the Weir Farm Art Center, stone wall workshops, guided tours, exhibits, children's art classes, and the resident artist programs. Our fabulous volunteers were on hand to help with the grounds and gardens, in the visitor center and the park archives. We also love to see the many hikers, skiers, and walkers who crisscross the park and the Weir Preserve -- making us part of their day.

The Sperry Andrews exhibit was a tremendous success and we look forward to the many new exhibits planned for this year. We would also

like to congratulate the Weir Farm Art Center, formerly the Weir Farm Trust, on their new name and exciting new direction. Join me in welcoming new Executive Director Daphne Deeds to Weir Farm. Her vast experience and her dedication to the site should prove invaluable as the role of the Art Center evolves this year.

We have already begun to rehabilitate the Weir House and studios and have also sought to provide protection for our diverse collections and objects through continued coordination with the local community on the park's much needed Preservation Building.

Thank you again for all you do for Weir Farm.

Linda Cook
Superintendent



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Weir Farm National Historic Site
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Weir Farm Art Center
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EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA

Restoration of Decorative Iron Finials Completed

By the end of the nineteenth century, Julian Alden Weir and his family had out grown their small farmhouse on Nod Hill. In 1900, Weir enlisted the help of friend, artist and architect Charles Platt to expand his Branchville home.

Platt's plan for the home nearly doubled the size of the existing structure, and repositioned the house's southern exposure as the more prominent entrance. To achieve the classical symmetry of the Greek Revival structure, he added a colonnaded verandah to the southern side of the home that partially obscured the off-center main doorway.

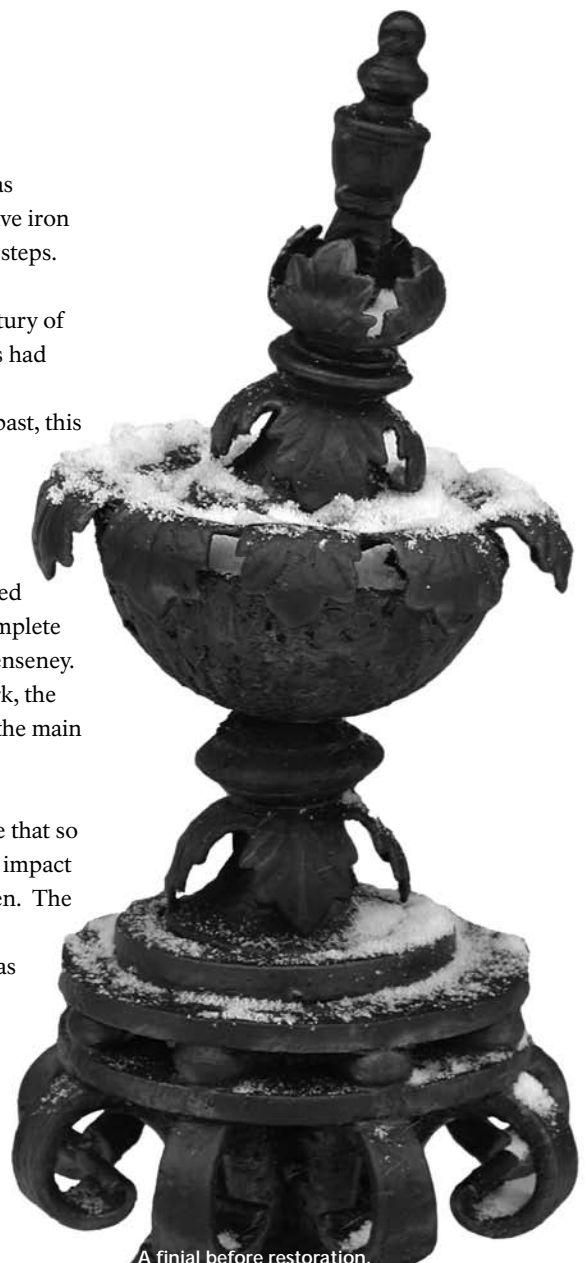
Soon after the work on the house was completed, Weir added two decorative iron finials to either side of his new front steps.

Unfortunately after more than a century of exposure, the condition of the finials had degraded severely. Although minor restorations were carried out in the past, this year the restoration of these historic objects became a significant priority for the site.

This summer, the finials were removed from the porch and underwent a complete restoration by blacksmith William Senseney. After two months of meticulous work, the finials were returned to the steps of the main house.

They no longer show the signs of age that so drastically compromised their visual impact before the restoration was undertaken. The completed finials are an invaluable component of the house, and stand as a lasting credit to Mr. Senseney's craftsmanship and expertise.

For more information about the finial restoration project and Mr. Senseney, please visit <http://www.geocities.com/ironrestoration@sbcglobal.net/>.



A finial before restoration.



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

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